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FURTHER PUBLIC STATEMENT OF BOB HALSTEAD

EIS000643

DEC 09 1999

MR. HALSTEAD: For the record, I'm Bob Halstead, Transportation Adviser to the State of Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects.

That is another hard speech to follow.

1 Let me briefly tell you about three important safety issues. First, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which for better or worse we all have to depend on to try and protect us from the dangers of this highly radioactive material, is now reexamining the report called the Modal Study. Without getting into all the details, this is the big report that the Department of Energy's Draft EIS relies upon primarily for its assessment that transportation is safe.

Why is the NRC reconsidering its basic report? First, it's because there are new cask designs being submitted.

Secondly, there are improvements in the computer models.

But third, it's because the NRC recognizes that the future shipments are going to be radically different from shipments in the past, and they have to reexamine all their basic assumptions.

They understand there will be 35 times more spent fuel shipped per year in the future than over the past two decades, eight to 24 times more shipments, 500 percent increase in the average shipment distance for rail, 200 percent increase in the average shipment distance for truck, and in the past, 70 percent of all the shipments have been in the East. Now you are going to have shipments coming into the West where you have mountainous terrain, more severe winter weather, and different operating conditions, particularly higher speeds and longer emergency response times.

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(cont'd.)

Sadly, the NRC will not complete their reassessment of safety until the year 2003, after the Department of Energy completes its Environmental Impact Statement.

2 Second issue, dedicated trains, what are they? Dedicated trains are trains that haul one cargo only as opposed to big general freight trains that can be a hundred cars long. Everybody in the railroad world, they don't agree on much, they agree that spent nuclear fuel is so dangerous it should only be moved in dedicated trains.

That was a big point of discussion at both of the Modal Study meetings I went to three weeks ago in Bethesda, Maryland, and yesterday in Henderson, Nevada. It is the official position of the Association of American Railroads.

In fact, the only people who operate against this are the old Southern Pacific, now part of the UP,

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which has a long-standing agreement with the Navy that for national security reasons, they won't impose dedicated train requirements. But the Navy fuel is much less dangerous in the sense that it's armor because it is designed for combat situations, and it's designed in different casks. And the Southern Pacific and now the UP requires it to be shipped at speeds never higher than 35 miles per hour.

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(cont'd.)

[So everybody in the railroad world disagrees with what DOE is proposing to do. And they believe the dedicated trains should be mandatory.]

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(cont'd.)

Third issue: How fast should this fuel move? [The official position of the Association of American Railroads is maximum speed of 35 miles per hour, and that's when it is in a dedicated train.]

There is only one deviation from this policy. The Union Pacific has certain tracks where the general freight is moving so fast, often at 75 miles per hour, that the dedicated trains traveling certain segments will have to be moved at 55 miles an hour to get them out of the way of the other faster moving trains.

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[Nobody in the railroad world would argue that you should move this fuel as fast as DOE is proposing. They say up to 50 miles per hour on their spur, which won't be a top notch railroad. It won't have 135 pound per yard rail or concrete ties or top notch signaling systems unless somehow we can force DOE to do that.

Again, I would say from the State of Nevada's standpoint, we're not sure there's any safe speed to move this cargo at. But we're certainly against any proposal to move it at a speed faster than 35 miles per hour. And on most stretches of track on a spur, there simply won't be any reason to move it faster. So why would you move it faster than you need to, only I think if you put cost ahead of safety.]

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. I so appreciate seeing this many people at a meeting. This is a wonderful turnout compared to the meetings in bigger cities. If people had had meeting turnouts like this, it would have been a very refreshing situation. And I appreciate all the comments tonight. Thank you.